

# When Evacuations are Ordered

Hurricanes are the most common reason evacuations are ordered in Santa Rosa County, but orders can be issued at anytime for other types of disasters that will impact our area to insure the safety of residents and visitors alike. Evacuations are the movement of people to a safe area, from an area believed to be at risk, when emergency situations necessitate such action. Being told to evacuate is no doubt disruptive and inconvenient, but it is necessary to ensure the safety of you and your loved ones. When evacuation notices are given, residents and visitors must adhere to evacuation guidelines and immediately travel to a place outside of the evacuation zone. In Santa Rosa County, there are two types of evacuations:

## MANDATORY EVACUATION

A mandatory evacuation is an organized, official evacuation, ordering residents to leave an area of danger. Santa Rosa County Emergency Management coordinates shelter openings, if necessary, in conjunction with mandatory evacuations. Additionally, traffic control measures are implemented in order to expedite and direct traffic flow. General, pet, and special needs shelters will be open.



## RECOMMENDED EVACUATION

A recommended evacuation is a requested evacuation, not mandatory, because an impending disaster may occur. The residents in the affected area are encouraged to seek refuge on their own initiative and independently obtain safe area and accommodations. Depending on threat, shelters may or may not open.

## Should I Stay or Should I go?

Evacuation is a big choice and it brings with it many decisions to make. It is your responsibility to determine the risk for your family. One of those decisions is whether to stay in Santa Rosa County or to drive hundreds of miles out of town. Evacuating tens of miles to shelter within the county has its advantages. You can avoid traffic jams and uncertainty that comes with hitting the crowded highways as other counties evacuate along with Santa Rosa. You can avoid going elsewhere in the state only to find the storm has shifted and now you are in harms way. You will also avoid the crowds when it comes time to return home.

Should you decide to stay, plan ahead to find safe shelter. Ask family or friends if you can stay with them during a storm, find a hotel or motel in a safe area of the county or know where the closest shelter is and how to get there. Just make sure that if you stay, you are in a safe location for the type of event we are experiencing.

When making the decision to evacuate or not, ask yourself these questions:

- Q** Do you live in a mobile or manufactured home?
- A** Everyone who lives in a mobile or manufactured home should always evacuate.

- Q** Do you live in an evacuation zone?
- A** If you don't know your zone, you can look it up by typing in your address at [www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency). Click on "emergency management" and then "evacuation zones." Be ready to follow the evacuation orders issued by officials for your zone.

- Q** Do you know where the public shelters are located?

- A** Santa Rosa County does not have any hurricane shelters south of Interstate 10. This is because that area is the area of greatest risk. This is not only because of storm surge or wind damage but also the possibility of roads and areas becoming impassable or inaccessible for emergency services being able to reach you.

- Q** Do you have special needs or vulnerabilities (see page 11)?
- A** Make sure you have a plan and if you need to go to the Special Needs Shelter, you must be pre-registered. You can register on-line, by phone or by mail.

## When Evacuating

- ✓ Evacuate quickly and in daylight if possible.
- ✓ Tell someone outside the warning area where you are going.
- ✓ Follow the official evacuation routes.
- ✓ Have a back-up plan in case you cannot reach your "safe-place."
- ✓ Keep a full tank of gas in your car.
- ✓ Be alert for washed out roads and bridges.
- ✓ Do not drive in flooded areas. Stay away from downed power lines.
- ✓ Consider the needs of children, elderly and pets.
- ✓ Visit [www.floridaevacuates.com](http://www.floridaevacuates.com) for state-wide evacuation & shelter information.

- Q** Do you need to go to the Pet Friendly Shelter?
- A** Make sure you have your pet pre-registered and understand the procedures for the pet friendly shelter. You must stay at the shelter with your pet!
- Q** Do you require transportation to a shelter?
- A** Before an evacuation is ordered, pre-register by calling (850) 983-5360. If an evacuation has already been ordered, call (850) 983-INFO (4636) to arrange transportation.

**For more information on evacuations, visit [www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency](http://www.santarosa.fl.gov/emergency).**